

Connections

February 2012

Traffic Fatalities Decline for Sixth Straight Year

The last time annual traffic fatalities were as low as the preliminary numbers for 2011, drivers lucky enough to have a radio in the car could cruise while listening to the new recording of “Some Enchanted Evening” by Perry Como.

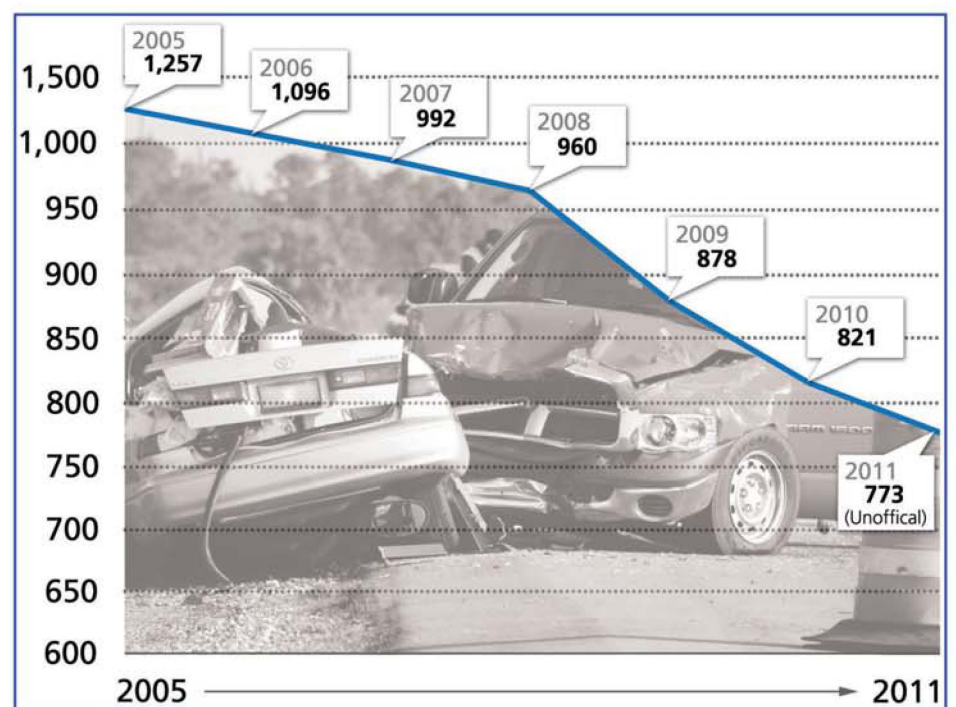
Though the count will not be considered final for a few months, the Missouri Department of Transportation announced that as of Jan. 4, Missouri traffic crash fatalities totaled 781 in 2011. This is nearly five percent lower than the 821 fatalities experienced in 2010 and the lowest total since the late 1940s.

“Last year was the sixth consecutive year Missouri’s crash fatality rate fell,” said Leanna Depue, MoDOT’s Highway Safety director. “We applaud Missouri drivers who pay attention, drive defensively and

take care to travel safely. They share credit for this drop in fatalities with a number of hard-working law enforcement professionals and emergency services personnel, those who focus on highway and vehicle safety improvements and messengers who help people adopt safer behaviors. These dedicated folks help more people arrive alive.”

The Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety, a group of safety partners, challenged the state to work toward a goal of 850 or fewer roadway fatalities by 2012. That goal was met in 2010 and has since been surpassed. But Depue said the coalition would not rest and would continue to work toward zero fatalities in Missouri.

To learn more about safe travel, visit www.saveMOLives.com.



MoDOT Releases Free Traveler Information Map App for iPhone and Android

Now you can check Missouri road conditions from the palm of your hand!

With the launch of MoDOT’s new Traveler Information Map mobile app, Missouri travelers can get the latest information on road conditions, work zones, flooding and incidents on their iPhones and Androids.

The Map App offers the same information as its online big brother, the Traveler Information Map, but with the convenience people have come to expect with the mobile revolution.

When the map loads, users see the entire state at a glance and can zoom in for a better view by tapping the screen on iPhones or using the pan and zoom buttons on the Android version. Weather-related road conditions are loaded as a default, but

users can view work zones and incidents by tapping the “Conditions” button and choosing their display options. Even still shots of traffic are a viewable option for some routes.

Radar images supplied by the National Weather Service are also available so travelers can keep an eye on continuously changing weather conditions and plan their trips accordingly.

Information is updated continuously throughout snow and ice events. For incidents, work zones and flooding, visitors can tap on icons for more information on delays.

Easy to use, easy to install, the app is available at both the iPhone App Store (for iPhone 3GS and above) and Android Marketplace. If you don’t have

one of those, but still have a smartphone, you can view the app as a web page on MoDOT’s mobile web site at www.modot.org.

The Traveler Information Map is only one tool Missouri travelers should use when driving across the Show-Me state. Local weather reports and law enforcement alerts should also be a part of any travel plan, especially during the winter months.

As always, MoDOT urges people to not use their mobile device while driving.



Inside

4



King’s Dream
CO’s Rudy Nickens speaks about diversity in the Hannibal area

6



Tweets
NE District uses Twitter strategy to explain snow preparedness

8



Slam Dunk
CE District participates in basketball competition to highlight roadway safety

10



Growth Spurt
Communities in SW District see economic benefits of new I-49

11



Buckling Up
SE District schools earn cash during Battle of the Belt Challenge

New Cell Phone Regulations for Commercial Motor Vehicles

Beginning January 3, 2012, commercial motor vehicle drivers can no longer use hand-held mobile phones while driving. The new rule is being implemented by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration after research indicated drivers distracted by hand-held phones pose a safety risk to themselves and other motorists.

Specifically, the rule prohibits drivers from reaching for, holding, or dialing a mobile phone while driving, and applies to commercial motor vehicle truck and bus drivers who operate in Missouri as well as interstate drivers. School bus drivers and those driving vehicles designed to carry nine to 15 passengers are also included.

The new rule applies when the vehicle is in operation on the highway, when temporarily stopped on the highway for traffic, or when waiting at a stoplight, stop sign or other traffic control device.

Drivers can use a hand-held cell phone only if the vehicle is stopped in an area safe for parking a commercial vehicle, or to communicate with law

enforcement or other emergency services to report emergencies. “It’s about safety,” said MoDOT Motor Carrier Services Director Jan Skouby. “Any steps that can be taken to reduce fatalities is something MoDOT will support in any way we can.”

The rule affects all commercial motor vehicles operating in interstate commerce with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,001 pounds or more or a vehicle transporting any amount of hazardous materials requiring a placard. Also affected are drivers of vehicles operated solely in intrastate commerce with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 pounds or more or a vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,001 pounds or more carrying any amount of hazardous materials.

The new rule includes all contracted school bus operations and shuttle buses. Intrastate carriers who are currently exempted from the federal regulations by the state of Missouri will remain unaffected by the new rule.

The use of hands-free and push-to-talk devices are allowed; however, drivers can only use hands-free phones and

headsets if the phone is in their reach while being restrained by a seat belt in the driver’s seat. Dialing a hands-free phone while in motion is allowed only if it can be done by striking a single button.

Push-to-talk devices can be used provided the driver is able to touch the button needed to operate the push-to-talk feature from the normal seated position with the safety belt fastened.

The use of CB radios, other two-way radio communication or electronic devices, is not included.

Commercial driver’s license holders

with multiple convictions for violating the restriction could face disqualification, meaning loss of their CDL privilege. Violators can face federal civil penalties of up to \$2,750 for each offense. Companies that allow their commercial truck or bus drivers to use hand-held phones while driving face a fine of up to \$11,000. Citations of hand-held mobile phone violation will affect both driver and carrier (company) federal CSA (Compliance, Safety, Accountability) scores.

To review the full federal regulation, visit <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-12-02/html/2011-30749.htm>

In the Spotlight!

Missouri State Employees Building a Brighter Tomorrow

Do you know of an employee that deserves recognition?
Put them in the spotlight!

<http://spotlight.mo.gov>

Four Employees Receive Meritorious Safety Awards

Four dedicated employees were recognized at the Jan. 4 commission meeting for their life-saving efforts.

■ **Ed Howser and Harry Scurlock**
Central District
Harry and Ed helped a motorist who had driven into the median and was thrown from his truck. Together they were able to get the man into Ed’s pickup truck and keep him warm and moving to help with circulation. The gentleman refused to go to the hospital, so Ed took him safely home.

■ **Brian Lunsford**
Kansas City District
District personnel received a call around 10:30 p.m. on Feb. 1 from a citizen who hadn’t heard from two family members since 3:00 p.m. that afternoon. Brian responded to the call and drove to the route the two likely had traveled. He found a vehicle that had gone off the road and down an embankment. Brian



The 2011 Meritorious Award Recipients being recognized at the January commission meeting. Front row, left to right: Joe Carmichael, Chad Embrey, Brian Lunsford, Grace Nichols and Rudy Farber. Back row, left to right: Kevin Keith, Stephen Miller and Kenneth Suelthaus.

helped the stranded motorists to his truck and they were delivered home safely.

■ **Chad Embrey**
Southwest District
Chad and a friend were fishing at

the Lake of the Ozarks, when they heard a lady yelling and went to help. The woman’s husband was drowning. Chad and his friend jumped in the water, brought the man to shore and began CPR. Chad

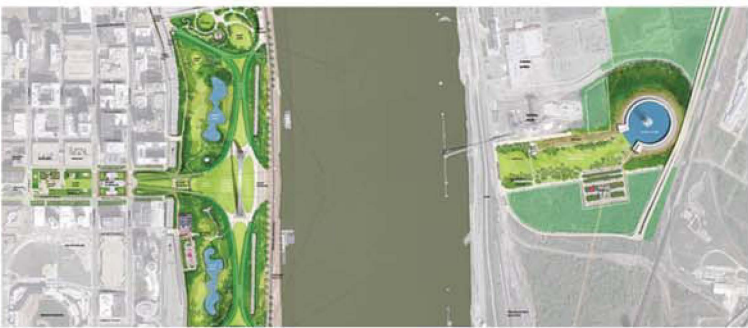
estimates he performed CPR for about 15 minutes before the gentleman started coming around and emergency services arrived.

Federal Grant to Improve Area Around St. Louis Arch

Missouri has received a \$20 million federal grant to improve the area surrounding the St. Louis Arch. The grant will help fund a project that will reconnect the Arch grounds and the Mississippi River with downtown St. Louis. The project will replace outdated bridges and other infrastructure.

It also calls for improvements along the I-70 corridor between the new Mississippi River Bridge and the Poplar Street Bridge to accommodate vehicle and pedestrian traffic. When completed, the work will improve access to the downtown area and make travel in that area safer and more efficient.

For more information, visit www.dot.gov.



An aerial view of the extensive improvement project.

Schools Cash In For Buckling Up

One hundred and fifty-five high schools in Missouri participated in this year’s Battle of the Belt Challenge, a competition to raise seat belt use among teens.

Participating schools launched a surprise seat belt check at the beginning of the program last fall and then spent several weeks educating the student body on the importance of seat belts and promoting their life-saving benefits. After the awareness activities, students are surprised with another check of their seat belt use.

The winners in each of seven regions of the state get \$500 from American Family Insurance for having the highest seat belt use of the competing schools in their region or for making the most improvement from the first seat belt

check to the second among schools in their region.

Schools can also win a gold, silver or bronze banner to showcase their life-saving achievement. Schools with 99-100 percent seat belt use receive a gold banner, those with 95-98 percent get silver and those with 91-94 percent get a bronze banner to be displayed at their schools. The banners are donated by the Missouri College of Emergency Room Physicians.

In addition, schools had the opportunity to submit a 30-second video spot to encourage their peers to buckle up. Twelve Missouri schools submitted 41 videos. The schools with the top three winning videos will also receive money donated by American Family Insur-

ance to further seat belt educational programs. The winning videos were submitted by the following schools and can be viewed by visiting www.save-MOLives.com.

1st Place	Summit Technology Academy (Lee’s Summit) \$500
2nd Place	Summit Technology Academy (Lee’s Summit) \$300
3rd Place	Columbia Area Career Center (Columbia) \$200

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for people 15-20 years old. Results of a 2011 survey of Missouri teens indicate 33 percent of teens do not wear their seat belt, putting them at greater



risk to be killed or injured in traffic crashes. Seven out of 10 teens killed in Missouri traffic crashes are unbuckled.

Battle of the Belt was originally brought to southwest Missouri by the Missouri Emergency Nurses Association and St. John’s Hospital. In 2006, the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety, in conjunction with American Family Insurance, took the competition statewide and continue to sponsor this year’s program with the Missouri College of Emergency Physicians.

Battle of the Belt Contest-Winning Schools

Northwest District	
Osborn High School	Highest Overall & Gold Level
North Nodaway Jr-Sr. High School	Most Improved
Northwestern High School	Silver Level
West Nodaway High School	Silver Level
Northeast District	
Marion County High School	Highest Overall & Silver Level
Wellsville High School	Most Improved
Warrenton High School	Silver Level
Mark Twain Sr. High School	Silver Level
South Shelby High School	Bronze Level
Highland Jr.-Sr. High School	Bronze Level
Kansas City District	
Midway High School	Highest Overall & Gold Level
Valley View High School	Most Improved & Gold Level
Raymore-Peculiar Sr. High School	Silver Level
Sherwood High School	Silver Level
Pleasant Hill High School	Silver Level
Lawson High School	Silver Level
Park Hill South High School	Silver Level
Belton High School	Bronze Level
North Platte High School	Bronze Level
Sweet Springs High School	Bronze Level

Central District	
Calvary Lutheran High School	Highest Overall & Gold Level
Glasgow High School	Most Improved
Eugene High School	Silver Level
Crocker High School	Silver Level
Kingston High School	Silver Level
Jefferson City High School	Bronze Level
Morgan County R-I High School	Bronze Level
Morgan County R-II High School	Bronze Level
St. Louis District	
Christian Brothers College High School	Highest Overall & Silver Level
Lafayette Sr. High School	Most Improved and Bronze Level
St. Joseph Academy	Silver Level
St. Francis Borgia Regional High School	Bronze Level
Southwest District	
Logan-Rogersville High School	Highest Overall & Bronze Level
Halfway Secondary School	Most Improved
Southeast District	
Notre Dame Regional High School	Highest Overall & Gold Level
Belle City High School	Most Improved
Saxony Lutheran High School	Gold Level
Southland High School	Bronze Level
Oran High School	Bronze Level
Valle High School	Bronze Level

February Service Anniversaries				November Retirements			In Memoriam		
35 Years		Douglas D. Glaser	SE	Name	District	Years of Service	Retirees	Retired From:	
Shirley J. Norris	SL	Kenneth A. Shamet	CO	Peter Robertson	NW	34	Marvin Ransdell	Former D5	Nov. 29
Randy D. Pamperien	SE	10 Years		Barry Arthur	NW	26	Vurbel Delcour	Former D8	Nov. 29
30 Years		Donald R. Hake	CD	Dennis Fessler	NE	39	Carl Wightman	Former D1	Dec. 3
David W. Laughlin	CD	Teresa M. Mount	SL	Melvorn Worley	NE	21	Edward Speakman	Former D10	Dec. 7
Tom M. Stratman	SL	Joshua S. Claspill	SL	Randal Shubert	NE	29	Raymond Appel	Former D3	Dec. 19
Alan C. Evers	GS	Jesse A. Jonas	SL	Sharon Taegel	KC	26	Rado Vincent, Sr.	Former D2	Dec. 23
Terry W. Wilson	CO	Charles A. Armstrong	SW	William Shenkner	KC	29	Marie Landrum	CO	Dec. 24
25 Years		Michelle F. Rogers	CO	Wallace Shelton	KC	34	Jimmie Clark	Former D1	Dec. 25
Barbara E. Holland	NW	Glory M. Umah	CO	Junior McCoy	KC	34	Charles Smith	Former D7	Dec. 25
Christine A. Ruby	KC	5 Years		Richard Klein	SL	28	Donald Kalvin	Former D6	Dec. 28
William M. Wade	CD	Mark S. Shelton	NW	Clifford Whitworth	SW	28	Robert Stump	Former D1	Dec. 31
Bruce L. Wright	SL	Mark L. Morris	NE	Tim Rice	SW	37	Robert Darden	Former D4	Dec. 31
20 Years		Barry L. Phelps	NE	Connie Roe	SE	18			
Curtis C. Allinson	CD	Kenneth W. Carmack	KC	Robert York	SE	25			
Danny R. Smith	SW	Shawn J. Buschjost	CD	Mary Plassmeyer	CO	18			
Barry W. Weaver	SW	Philip E. Hamilton	CD	Dianna Silvester	CO	34			
Christian O. Schwandtner	CO	Gary A. Mazdra	SL	Janis Evers	CO	20			
15 Years		Susan M. Summers	SL	Mary Kladiva	CO	21			
Curtis L. Tallman	NE	Carrie E. Fodge	SW						
Patricia L. Rath	KC	Shea N. Shaddox	SW						
Susan D. DeClue	SL	Neal M. Isaak	CO						
Joseph P. Allgier	SE	Joshua N. Kampeter	CO						
Brian D. Tune	SE	Anthony A. Zuccarini	CO						

Central Office

Everyone Challenged to Continue King's 'dream'

Edited from the Hannibal Courier-Post / Article by Bev Darr

The large crowd attending the Martin Luther King, Jr. program at Willow Street Christian church in Hannibal was challenged to actively work toward eliminating racism and other related problems.

Issuing that challenge was featured speaker, our very own Rudy Nickens, MoDOT's director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, who began by sharing a memory from his days as "a kid from the projects in Washington, D.C."

One day in 1962, his father came home and told the family they were going somewhere. They traveled and stood in a field with hundreds of others at a rally to gather support for the 1963 March on Washington.

When Martin Luther King, Jr. addressed the gathering, Nickens said, "I saw my father stand taller than ever."

As he learned about civil rights and observed the struggle with young eyes, it made a deep impression. He watched neighborhoods cooperate and work for a common goal, something he'd not seen before.

Cooperation was necessary to overcome the legacy of racism. Nickens described the horrors committed to gain compliance from slaves and the anger and fear caused by racial divide. Those feelings had to change.

"Dr. King instructed people to live in love and peace," said Nickens.

Nickens noted that Dr. King's words endure and continue to challenge us. "To eliminate racism and other problems," he said, "we must learn to support one another. I understand the past is important, but what are we going to do for ourselves today?"



Featured speaker Rudy Nickens, MoDOT's director of the Equal Opportunity & Diversity Division.

Jones Sheds Pounds, Earns Biggest Loser Title

by Anthony Zuccarini

Joe Jones' pants may be looser. However, his pockets became \$430 heavier.

Jones, engineering policy administrator at Central Office, recently won "Central Office's Biggest Loser Challenge – Christmas Edition," by dropping 12.85 percent of his body weight. Jones narrowly squeezed past the second place finisher by 1.5 percent. The third place finisher lost 7.43 percent and the fourth place winner lost 5.35 percent.



Shedding pounds can open up a whole new wardrobe of possibilities. Losing just 10 percent of your body weight can improve heart health, lower the risk of Type 2 Diabetes, provide more energy and improve overall self-confidence and motivation.

According to Weight Watchers, those interested in losing weight should set milestones. Success builds on success as reaching the first milestone gives confidence to continue.

In February, Central Office will team up with the Central District to hold a "Biggest Loser – Spring into Shape" competition. The competition will be held for eight weeks, beginning Feb. 1. Registration is \$10, and progress percentages will be posted anonymously each week.

If interested, contact Carol Lueckenhoff at 573-526-5617 or at Carol.Lueckenhoff@modot.mo.gov.

Masters of the Elements

by DeAnne Rickabaugh / photos by Cathy Morrison

It was made apparent to me in my high school days that a career in chemistry was far beyond my reach. I'm thankful I had that epiphany before any real damage was done to the school or my classmates.

Yet I've always been fascinated by the folks that understand the functioning of the elements. This week, John Bell and Tracy Adams, two of MoDOT's senior chemists were hard at work, coaxing chemicals to provide answers we need to build the best possible transportation system.

John worked on an emulsion distillation. Yes. John has a still...at work. Only this still removes water from an asphalt emulsion so he can test the properties of the asphalt residue that remains.

It's got to meet stringent requirements to be accepted for use in road building and maintenance. By the way, he does not recommend drinking the results of the distillation. Ewww.

Tracy used three solutions to calibrate the pH meter before testing rock samples submitted as potential backfill material on an upcoming project. Her testing would reveal whether the acidity/basic level of the minerals in the



John Bell (top) and Tracy Adams work in the MoDOT chemistry lab.

rock will interact well with all of the other materials used on the project. Yes, road building needs to be that scientific – if you want highways, runways and other structures to last.

It's always interesting to peek around the corner and see who does what at MoDOT. What wonder will we find next? Check back to find out!

for more info

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Northwest District

Trooper's Body Recovered

by M. Elaine Justus



Trooper Fred Guthrie Jr had been missing since Aug. 1, 2011.

The story made national news last August. Trooper Fred Guthrie Jr. and his K-9 partner, Reed, were working flood duty near the intersection of Routes 118 and 111 in Holt County near Big Lake State Park when they both went missing. Although Reed's body was found shortly after the incident, Trooper Guthrie could not be located. Efforts to find him began with dive teams and sonar, heavy earth moving machinery and cadaver dogs. The Missouri State Highway Patrol continued foot searches until deteriorating weather hampered their efforts.

In mid-January, MoDOT awarded a contract to Hill Brothers Construction to fill a four-acre gap in Route 111 with silt from nearly 44,000 acres of flooded farmland. The removal of several feet of sand exposed Trooper Guthrie's body. According to Sgt. Sheldon Lyon, spokesman for the MSHP, "It's a relief and kind of a joyous day for us, because

we were able to locate him for the family. It's still very sad, but it's something we've been after for a long time. We've worked a lot of hours up there, which speaks highly of our organization - we don't leave anyone behind." Guthrie was a 17-year veteran of the Missouri State Water Patrol and MSHP, serving Troop A in Platte City. He was a decorated officer who received, among other awards, the Medal of Valor for his rescue of a woman in risk of drowning at Smithville Lake.

A statement from Gov. Jay Nixon read, "We honor the memory of this courageous law enforcement officer, and our prayers are with his family, friends and colleagues as they mourn his loss."

The target completion date for this initial project is April 15. Once the scour hole is filled, the road surface will be replaced and travel on Route 111 will be restored.



Route 111 as it appeared last July as flood waters began to recede.

Blueprint Grants Announced

by M. Elaine Justus

Through its new application process, the Northwest Region Coalition for Roadway Safety recently awarded grants totaling more than \$35,000 in funding to improve safety.

"We are extremely pleased with the results of this first effort," says Tony McGaughy, director of the coalition's northwest region.

In previous years, programs that promote traffic safety, including the Battle of the Belt, I'm a Safe Driver, and various other educational campaigns have been funded through this money.

This year, a new grant application program was implemented in cooperation with area regional planning commissions. Applications were made available to schools, community groups, law enforcement, health centers, and others. All submissions were reviewed and scored by local Transportation Advisory Committee members, and by members of the Northwest Region's Blueprint Coalition. Grant reviewers scored based on eligibility and best use of funds to improve safety on our roads.

Seventeen applications were received, and 10 were approved for funding.

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January Events

by M. Elaine Justus

January was a very busy month in the Northwest District. Although we have been granted a reprieve (so far) from the serious winter weather, the good weather allowed a lot of other projects to continue.

As everywhere, progress on the Bolder Five Year Direction and the subsequent

reorganization/reassignment of jobs, continues. Appointments, interviews and announcements consume a large amount of time. Relocating offices and learning the demands of new assignments are also a challenge as MoDOT continues in their effort to put the right people in the right jobs.



Eula Morrow

Since the groundbreaking ceremony, progress on the new Amelia Earhart Memorial Bridge across the Missouri River has been documented (at no cost to MoDOT) by our volunteer photographer/pilot Jon Morrow of Winthrop, Mo. He experienced a stroke last August, so we have been unable to add images to our district website. In January, his wife Eula began taking pictures on his behalf. Jon hopes to be up and taking photographs again in February.



Holly L. Hailey

A Safe & Sound public meeting was held in Rock Port, Mo., on Jan. 11. Atchison County is scheduled for three bridge replacement projects in 2012, the last bridges in the last year of the Safe & Sound bridge improvement program. In addition, a fourth bridge will be replaced as part of STIP. All four bridges are on high-volume routes, so it was imperative to share detour and closure information in advance.



Melissa Black

Northwest District Human Resources Manager Kendra Ezzell participated in the Blood Drive held Jan. 12. Turnout is normally 25-30 donors, but numbers were down this time because MoDOT crews had been out the night before plowing snow and were unable to come. All donors received a free T-shirt.

Northeast District

A Tweet From Our Fleet

by Marisa Brown-Ellison

Snow plowing is serious business, so when I mentioned to Maintenance Superintendent Butch Mundle I wanted to tweet from a snow plow, he humored me. For those not familiar with the social media resource known as Twitter, MoDOT utilizes it as a way to share information online.

Jamie Gottman was my capable snow “chauffeur,” and we took out onto US 61 north of Palmyra on January 12 at 7 a.m. Snow was flying, wind blowing, and it was downright cold. Not in the plow, though. I could safely tweet the experience in a comfortable, heated setting. I tried not to distract Jamie; he was excellent at paying attention, and you have to be in a snow plow.

I tweeted “there are several controls used in the cab, such as one for the gears, one for the blade, and one for the wing plow.” I forgot to mention the spreader control panel on the dashboard. Jamie never missed a beat, or an intersection,

or a shoulder.

Considering this event was the first time many drivers had been in snow this year, it was no surprise traffic was driving slowly, yet motorists practiced good snow plow etiquette. I tweeted about the condition of the road and the blowing wind contributing to the challenge of keeping the highway clear. Jamie and the other 150 snow plow drivers in northeast Missouri had their work cut out for them in the frigid temps. Just when progress seemed to be made, it started snowing harder.

Jamie asked if I was ready to go back to the office, and I was. Tweeting for two hours could have been challenging, yet Jamie and our surroundings kept it interesting. The result of the “tweet from our fleet” was 15 new followers, a couple of retweets from a local television station, and a new way to keep our 184 followers informed.



This is a picture of another snow plow uploaded during Marisa’s “tweet from the fleet” experience. One of the the pictures uploaded during the tweeting session was used on a television website to accompany their story.

6



Behind the scenes during this winter event, Assistant Maintenance Supervisor Simon Begley and Maintenance Crew Leader Jody Geisendorfer go over road conditions and ensure crews are providing outstanding customer service.

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Around the District...



Don Trivette of Macon maintenance and several other crew members installed new way finding signs at either end of the new US 63 near Kirksville. MoDOT and the City of Kirksville have been working closely to make further improvements to Route P, which serves as a connector between the new highway and Business 63 through Kirksville. They are also working on determining a preferred truck-only route.



Maintenance Supervisor Mike Foppe took this picture of crews taking advantage of the unseasonably warm weather in January to replace an oversized tube on Rte. OO in Lincoln County.



DBE manager Lester Woods (right) visits with Ray Crider who attended an informational workshop in Hannibal specifically for small businesses, and those owned by women and minorities. About 30 people attended the event, which was held at the Hannibal Arts Council.



Potholes are a year-round issue for Missouri roads, and since the weather has been decent, most crews continued to repair.

Kansas City District

KC Scout Copper Thieves Caught in the Act

by Gina Myles

Copper theft is a national epidemic so pervasive that despite deterrent efforts, even the Kansas City Scout traffic management system has fallen prey to thieves. In the past 18 months, Scout has been victimized 19 times by vandals stealing copper from its network.

Thieves seeking copper for resale value less than \$300 per incident caused damages totaling more than \$150,000 for both the Missouri and Kansas departments of transportation and contractors.

The good news is that employee awareness training and law enforcement

collaboration efforts paid off. On Dec. 11, Emergency Response Operator Craig Burgett was on patrol on I-435 near 83rd Street when he noticed what he thought was a stranded U-Haul with two people standing in front of the truck. Burgett circled back around to offer assistance but soon realized it was he who was in need of help.

Following protocol, Burgett called the Scout Traffic Management Center to report his location and asked Traffic System Operator Mike Phillips to locate the vehicle on camera. When Burgett initially saw the truck from

the northbound lanes, it was parked directly under the Scout message sign. However by the time he came back around to help, the vehicle had been moved back about 100 yards and a man and a woman, wearing large backpacks, climbed over the guardrail and headed down the hill into the brush near the interstate.

Burgett became suspicious due to a recent rash of copper thefts, so he called the TMC back, notified the Scout operator of what he'd seen, and advised he was not going to approach the vehicle. He did, however, get close enough to get the license plate number. He backed his truck up out of sight and called the Kansas City Police Department, who are partners with Scout's Incident Management program. Burgett provided the police dispatcher with the license information and within approximately 10 minutes KCPD arrived on scene. The officers asked Burgett to disconnect the battery cables on the truck should the people return to the vehicle.

The couple ran when they saw police, leaving their tools behind. They had just begun stripping copper wiring from the fiber optic network, but did not have the chance to do any damage. "I'm just thankful I was paying attention,



Quick thinking by Emergency Response Operator Craig Burgett and the quick response from emergency responders allowed police to nab the would be copper thieves.



Emergency Response Operator Craig Burgett stopped thieves from stripping valuable copper from the KC Scout traffic management system's network.

arrived in time and was able to call for help before any damage was done to any of our wires or equipment," said Burgett. About 30 minutes later the police had both parties (husband and wife) in custody. The U-Haul truck was stolen out of St. Joseph, and the license plates were stolen out of Joplin.

"These thieves are breaking glass fiber optic lines that have no resale value when they rip out the copper," said MoDOT Transportation Project Manager Mark Sommerhauser "However it costs thousands of dollars to replace the fiber optics all for maybe \$250 worth of copper."

The Kansas City Police Department is investigating the couple to see if they have been involved in other thefts, and Burgett is to be commended for his actions and dedication to duty.

No Longer Deadlocked on Flintlock

by Kerri Lewis

What started in the planning stage in early 2003 is moving forward. The Flintlock Road Overpass, otherwise known as the Flintlock Flyover, is nearly ready for a June letting. An open-house public meeting in December shared with the public and elected officials the newly preferred alternative for location of the new roadway, and the overall consensus: it is ideal.

During the meeting, more than 40 people stopped by to see the new location and learn about the project. Members of the Reducing Accidents on Highway 152 Task Force also attended to show support for the project. This task force, formed by the Kansas City Police, studied the Route 152 corridor between Flintlock Road and Highway 291. The corridor has a high level of accidents in the area, with the intersections of Flintlock Road and Church Road in the top 5 crash locations for Kansas City.

Members on the task force included police and city leaders from Kansas City and Liberty, the Liberty School District, business representatives, MoDOT and concerned citizens. According to the final community report, the solution having the greatest effect is the Flintlock Flyover. This flyover would divert at least 7,500 vehicles a day from Route 152 and connect them to the east side of I-35.

A New Plan

KC District employees revisited the preliminary plans that were discussed in 2006. After reviewing and discussing the plans with the City of Liberty and other partners, a new plan was developed, eliminating the need to build the road through a majority of the heavily wooded area and creeks. The redesigned option is less intrusive to the environment and uses more of the existing roadway.

As this area of northern Clay County continues to thrive, the cities of Liberty and Kansas City, along with MoDOT and the Liberty School District collaborated to ensure that the area's transportation facilities meet the community's current and future needs.

Route 152 carries more than 28,000 vehicles per day moving motorists through the heart of Liberty. Add in 128 daily school bus trips from the west side of Liberty to transport more than 5,000 students to schools on the east side across I-35, creates even more congestion and raises safety concerns. To help move students more efficiently and help lessen the amount of traffic on Route 152, MoDOT and partners

will construct the Flintlock Overpass project.

Although the need is evident, the project has faced delay for some time due to funding issues, dead-locking the project. More than \$19 million in federal funding for the \$21 million project has been secured and the remaining funds, paid for by the City of Liberty and Kansas City, are now available. This allows MoDOT and partners to move forward and prepare for construction of the needed project.

So what happens next? Once design is approved, MoDOT will let the project in June 2012. Construction could begin as early as fall 2012 and will last approximately two years.

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A public meeting held in Liberty, MO shared the new preferred alternative for the Flintlock Road Overpass. Most attendees were pleased with the new design.

Central District

Coalition Helps to Make Safe Driving a Slam Dunk

As the crowd cheered and yelled, Buckle Bear, the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety mascot took center court in a basketball showdown with mascots from the National Guard and State Farm.

While Buckle Bear might not be a champ on the hardwood, the demon-



An Arrive Alive banner stands out in the background during the slam dunk contest.

Cathy Morrison

stration was a winning effort to gain the attention of young drivers attending the annual Capital City Hoops Tournament in Jefferson City, held Dec. 27-30, 2011.

“This is the second year that the regional coalition participated at the hoops tournament, which attracts basketball teams not only from the Central District area, but from around Missouri and surrounding states,” said Dianna Johnson, senior traffic technician.

Having Buckle Bear make an appearance isn’t the only way the coalition reaches out during the four-day event. Members of the coalition set up exhibits and activities around the gym so students and their families can interact and hopefully learn something about the coalition’s mission of safe driving.

“We want to grab their attention and encourage them to start talking about wearing their safety belt, not texting and driving, and other safe driving habits,” said Johnson. “It’s a fun way to drive home a serious message.”



Phaedra Marriott-Olsen spoke about her life after being hit by a drunk driver, and encouraged students to always be safe and responsible behind the wheel.

Cathy Morrison



Cathy Morrison

Buckle Bear greets coalition members who served as judges for the tournament’s slam dunk contest.

Participants at this year’s event also heard from Phaedra Marriott-Olsen, who talked to the players during an awards brunch at the conclusion of the tournament. Phaedra’s life was changed forever when she was a victim of a drunk driver, and she shared her compelling story with the group.

Traffic fatality numbers continue to fall across the state, and the regional

coalition continues to use outreach and educational efforts like the basketball tournament to get that number to drop in the Central District as well.

“We go to where the young drivers are to teach them about the importance of seat belts, sober driving and staying focused on the road,” said Dianna. “Our goal is to save lives.”

Winter Ops Plows Ahead

8

Day or night, when it snows in central Missouri, MoDOT is ready to plow and treat state roadways. We also immediately staff our emergency operations center so we can communicate with those who rely on the services we provide – including our maintenance crews, law enforcement, and the public.

Winter operations are key to the success of MoDOT’s Bolder Five-Year Direction. To ensure we have as many resources possible to contribute to this, the Central District expanded the list of employees who would assist in this effort.

Most safety sensitive employees not currently in maintenance were asked to help crews plow snow.

This means employees from traffic, construction, and other divisions have been training and working to earn their commercial drivers license so they can



Holly Dentner

Those employees who trained to get their CDL logged many practice hours with maintenance crews in MoDOT trucks.

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Holly Dentner

Senior Office Assistant Edith Walton shows Transportation Project Designer Randy Potts and Senior Highway Designer Sarah Kleinschmidt how to update winter road conditions for MoDOT’s Traveler Information Map.

help clear state routes as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Those employees who already had their commercial drivers license were trained in snow removal efforts and were ready to plow snow by the end of December. Those without their CDL worked through January to earn their license and were trained and ready by the first of February.

This change in direction also effected our EOC operations, as many employees who staffed the EOC during the

overnight hours are now on snow plow duty.

EOC members answer calls from customers, assist field personnel via the base radio and emergency operations phone, and update the traveler information map.

Employees from our design, right of way, risk management and other divisions stepped forward to join the EOC. They were trained in December and January.

We appreciate the “one team” attitude of everyone now involved in our winter weather operations. Our success as a district is a result of employees working hard to make that happen.



Holly Dentner

Maintenance Superintendent Jim Hager demonstrates a pre-trip vehicle inspection for Sr. Traffic Technician Dianna Johnson, Sr. Risk Management Specialist Joanie Prenger, and Sr. Highway Designer Matt Prenger.

St. Louis District

I-70 Blanchette Bridge Schedule Major Traffic Impacts Start Late Fall and Last Less Than One Year

by Linda Wilson

The tentative schedule for the \$62 million rehabilitation of the westbound Interstate 70 Missouri River Bridge (the Blanchette Bridge) includes closing the bridge starting in late fall 2012, and no earlier than Nov. 1. The work

now how they are going to use other Missouri River bridge crossings during peak morning and evening weekday rush hours.”

The Route 370 and Route 364 (Page Avenue) Missouri River bridges are the



Motorists travel on Interstate 70 at the Blanchette Bridge to connect between St. Charles and St. Louis counties. The closure of the westbound lanes for the rehabilitation project will start late fall 2012.

will take less than one year. An exact date for the closure is contingent on the manufacturing of steel for the bridge repairs and weather.

During the construction, three lanes of eastbound and three lanes of westbound I-70 will use the eastbound bridge. The two directions of traffic will be separated by a concrete barrier wall in the middle of the eastbound bridge. Lanes will be reduced to 11 feet wide with no shoulders. The speed limit on the bridge and through the work zone will be reduced to 45 mph.

“Knowing the contractor’s schedule to start in late fall gives us all many months to prepare for these traffic impacts,” said St. Louis District Engineer Ed Hassinger. “The good news is three lanes of I-70 will be open during the construction so you will be able to get to work, home, shopping and attractions in the area. However, we strongly encourage people to start thinking

primary alternate routes to use to avoid congestion on I-70 during the construction. Both bridges are located within a few miles of I-70 and provide an easy alternate to get to and from St. Charles and St. Louis counties, as well as in and out of the major business and shopping districts in downtown St. Charles and Earth City.

MoDOT’s St. Louis District is preparing to hold a Closure Command Center at the time of the closure to monitor traffic flow on I-70 and all the alternate routes. Work is also under way with the Motor Carriers Division to encourage through truck traffic to use Route 370 to avoid the work zone.

Construction work to prepare for the closure will begin in summer 2012. Lane closures will occur for this work primarily during off-peak hours. For more information, visit www.modot.org/blanchettebridge.

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I-270 and Dorsett/Page Team Receives Regional Award

by Kara Price

The Interstate 270 and Dorsett/Page project team recently received regional recognition

for successful work in the bridge repair of the Marine Avenue Overpass. This was part of the I-270 and Dorsett Page project in constructing St. Louis’ first diverging diamond interchange.

The Marine Avenue Overpass was selected for the 2011 Award of Excellence in the Transportation Category by the Great Plains Chapter of the International Concrete Repair Institute.

Interstate 270 and Dorsett/Page work consisted of several projects. It

included the construction of St. Louis’ first diverging diamond interchange, a redesigned interchange at I-270 and Page, an auxiliary lane on northbound I-270 between Olive and Page and a bridge rehabilitation at I-270 and Marine Avenue.

Congratulations to the project team for all its hard work and dedication in making it a success!



New Mississippi River Bridge Towers Reach 200 Feet

by Andrew Gates

With the help of about 10 truckloads of concrete, the new Mississippi River Bridge towers reached 200 feet tall.

The two towers are now about half their eventual height. The 400-foot towers are projected to be complete in late spring. Crews will then start plac-

ing the cables and the framework for the driving surface.

The entire Mississippi River Bridge project, including the relocated I-70, the Tri-Level Interchange in Illinois and the Missouri I-70 interchange, is still on track to be open to traffic in early 2014.



Crews lift concrete to place on one of the Mississippi River Bridge tower legs. The bridge towers have reached 200 feet tall, which is their halfway point to 400 feet.

Southwest District

Communities See New I-49 Spurring Economic Growth

by Angela Eden

The U.S. 71 transformation to Interstate 49 through the Southwest District is now just 11 short months away, and community leaders along the corridor are expecting good things as a result.

Take, for example, Nevada City Manager J.D. Kehrman.

“We’re looking at the Interstate 49 status as an economic driver,” Kehrman said during a Dec. 19 ribbon-cutting celebrating U.S. 71/I-49 projects completed

in 2011. “Safe travel to and from Nevada and Vernon County is only going to strengthen (the) sales tax base.”

Others expressed similar views at two other ceremonies on Dec. 19 – one at Adrian in Bates County and one at Lamar in Barton County. The gatherings celebrated the completion of five interchanges, two overpasses and a series of outer roads during 2011.

State Rep. Barney Fisher of Richards, at the Bates County celebration, thanked the contractors and MoDOT for the projects completed along the corridor in 2011.

“The work was done quickly and done well with a minimum of inconvenience,” Fisher said. “I think you can sum all this up in one word – that’s *progress*.”

The final upgrade projects are coming in 2012. Interchanges at Vernon County Route TT north of Nevada and Cass

County 307th Street north of Archie, overpasses at Cass County 327th Street and 283rd Street and an outer road near Rich Hill.

The work scheduled for 2012 will

complete the U.S. 71 upgrade to I-49 between Kansas City and Pineville in McDonald County. The process took several years and many projects to get to this point.

Final federal approval for the I-49 designation between Kansas City and Pineville has not been granted. However, MoDOT continues to meet quarterly with the Federal Highway Administration to work toward that goal by the end of 2012.

“We’re all working hard to meet that timeline,” Southwest District Engineer Becky Baltz said.



Among officials helping dedicate one of the U.S. 71/I-49 projects in Lamar are Missouri Highways and Transportation Commissioner Rudy Farber, fourth from right; District Engineer Becky Baltz, third from right; and state Rep. Mike Kelley of Lamar, sixth from right.



Bob Edwards

Southwest District at Work

Maintenance crews replaced drain pipes in various locations in the Southwest District, including Preston Maintenance shown working on Hickory County Route HH west of Urbana:

1. Smoothing an asphalt patch over a new pipe are, from left, Crew Leader Jason Eidson, Senior Maintenance Worker Kelly Tummons and Senior Maintenance Worker Murray Schreiner.

2. Running a backhoe to dig out an old pipe is Intermediate Maintenance Worker Justin Moriarty.

3. Compacting a new patch is Crew Leader Jason Eidson.

4. Transportation Project Manager Sean Matlock, right, explains the project to rebuild the I-44/Range Line Road interchange in Joplin during a public meeting at the Joplin Regional Office.

10 Key Joplin Crossroad to Become ‘Diverging Diamond Interchange’

by Bob Edwards

Another Diverging Diamond Interchange is coming to the Southwest District. This one will be at the I-44/Range Line Road interchange in Joplin.

However, the interchange reconstruction, scheduled to begin by late summer and be completed by the end of 2013, is more extensive than that.

The project indeed will convert Range Line Road (Business Route 71) into a Diverging Diamond Interchange configuration. It will shift Range Line

Road traffic to the left side of the road at new traffic signals on either side of I-44. The shift will eliminate conflict points for vehicles turning left onto I-44 and traffic traveling through the interchange on Range Line Road.

The project also will:

- Replace the two deteriorating I-44 bridges over Range Line Road. The bridges were built in 1960 when the interstate highway first was developed.
- Eliminate the cloverleaf ramps in favor of new straight ramps in a conventional

diamond shape, with longer I-44 on-ramps. No longer will accelerating traffic enter I-44 and decelerating traffic exit I-44 at the same point.

- Provide dual right-turn lanes on the westbound I-44-to-northbound Range Line Road ramp and dual left-turn lanes on the eastbound I-44-to-northbound Range Line Road ramp. Those two ramps carry a large amount of traffic into Joplin proper.

All elements are aimed at improving safety and traffic flow at one of the region’s most important crossroads.

“It’s the gateway to Joplin,” Assistant District Engineer Dan Salisbury said.

Information about the project can be found on the MoDOT/Southwest web site. Animations, drawings and written explanations are designed to help

people learn how to drive the new Diverging Diamond Interchange and understand the other changes being made.

Project Manager Sean Matlock is optimistic that Joplin area drivers will have little difficulty. The driving pattern is not difficult to learn, he said. Besides, many people probably have encountered the new design in two locations in Springfield and one in Branson.

“I think the learning curve won’t be very long,” he said.

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South
District

Local Schools Cash In on Buckling Up
Winners of the 2011 Battle of the Belt Challenge Announced

Statewide, 155 schools, including 38 in the Southeast region participated in this year's Battle of the Belt Challenge, a competition to raise seat belt use among teens.

Participating schools launched two surprise seat belt checks at each school to measure student seat belt use before and after a seat belt safety educational campaign. In addition, schools had the opportunity to submit a 30-second video spot to encourage their peers to buckle up.

Cape Girardeau's Notre Dame Regional High School won the Southeast regional award for the Highest Overall Seat Belt Use achieving 100 percent seat belt use. Bell City won the Southeast regional award for the Most Improved Seat Belt Use increasing their seat belt use from 28 percent to 78 percent. Both schools will receive \$500 donated by American Family Insurance to be used for future seat belt educational programs at the schools.

"We incorporated a number of educational activities for the competition," said Notre Dame senior Sarah McCrate. "The most effective activity was handing out funeral cards to those students not using seat belts during our checks." McCrate said the funeral cards included

the name and phone number of funeral homes so students could call and give information on who to contact in the event they would not survive a crash. Other education components included signing seat belt pledge cards, handing out candy with seat belt education messages and public service announcements playing on the school's internal television station.

Five schools in the Southeast region received statewide recognition for seat belt use reaching gold (99-100 percent), silver (95-98 percent) or bronze (91-94 percent) levels of seat belt use. Those schools received banners donated by the Missouri College of Emergency Physicians. Those schools included:

- Notre Dame High School, Cape Girardeau-Gold Level
- Saxony Lutheran High School, Cape Girardeau-Gold Level
- Southland High School, Cardwell-Bronze Level
- Oran High School, Oran-Bronze Level
- Valle High School, Ste. Genevieve-Bronze Level

"I believe our success can be attributed to a number of things, one being good parental role modeling," said Angela Schaefer, Notre Dame High School counselor. "Peer pressure is also a con-



Notre Dame High School seniors Sarah McCrate and Elizabeth Kiblinger conduct safety belt checks on sophomores Shelby Shaefer and Kelsey Tollison during the 2011 Battle of the Belt competition.

tributing factor. Students continually stress the importance of safety belt usage to their peers."

"We're proud of our local schools for showing a commitment to buckling up and wanting to help other teens understand the importance of wearing a seat belt every time they ride in or drive a vehicle," said Kelly Martin, regional coordinator for Battle of the Belt. "Seat belts save lives."

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for people 15-20 years old. Results of a 2011 survey among Missouri teens indicate 33 percent of teens are not wearing their seat belt putting them at greater risk to get killed or injured in traffic crashes. Seven out of 10 teens killed in Missouri traffic crashes are unbuckled.

Kevin Keith's SE District Visit



Left: MoDOT Director Kevin Keith stopped by the SE District office in Sikeston to discuss the Bolder Five-Year Direction. After discussing the significance of the BFYD, members of the management team were encouraged to ask questions about the upcoming months.



Right: After the meeting in Sikeston, Keith headed to Poplar Bluff to meet with employees from a variety of departments and divisions.

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District Innovations Challenge Winners

The Innovations Challenge posed the question "Have you or your work team made a tool, modified a piece of equipment or created a process to get work done faster, better or cheaper?" The Southeast answered with a resounding "yes!"

SE recently held a district competition



Culvert Shovel



Geomelt Applicator



Post Straightener

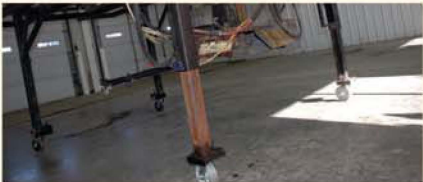
to select the top competitors. The winners will compete for the opportunity to share their ideas at the statewide Innovations Challenge. More information about the SE District Innovations Challenge winners included below is available at: <http://wwwi/intranet/d10/WLCMaintenance.htm>.



Hydraulic Pressure Release Wrench



Material Warmer



V-Bed Dolly

The mission of *Connections* is to be a monthly source of Missouri Department of Transportation news and feature articles that connect employees statewide. It is distributed to MoDOT employees and retirees.

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Workplace Security

by Tammy Wallace

As employees for a large organization that spans the entire state, we may not think about workplace security as we go through our normal work day. A new team within MoDOT is not just thinking about it, but taking action.

The Workplace Security Team is comprised of employees from Risk Management, Human Resources, Audit and Investigations and General Services, with representatives from both Central Office and the districts. The team was instructed to identify actions the department could take to further increase the security of all employees, whether in an office or a field environment. The team banded together several months ago, building upon the original plan implemented in the 1990s, with the goal of bringing it up to date to fit today's workplace needs.

Senior Human Resources Specialist Matt Davis said this was a natural evolution. The original policies and procedures currently in place were developed in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing when much attention in the country was focused on improving workplace security for governmental entities. It is again time to look at the next level of progression, according to Davis, which is exactly what the team has done.

Leading the group is the team's statewide coordinator, Central Office Safety and Health Officer Jeff Lockwood. The group was split into two teams: Team 1, led by the Southeast District's Health and Safety Manager Enos Criddle, worked on the more tangible aspects of the plan; while Lockwood and Team 2 worked on the administrative aspects.

Once the new plan was developed, it was presented to the team's sponsors, Risk & Benefits Director Jeff Padgett, Human Resources Director Micki Knudsen and Audits and Investigations

Director Bill Rogers. The sponsors were very impressed with the work that had been done and gave a green light to begin the implementation process.

"This team did great work," said Padgett. "They really thought through all aspects of what our employees do every day and the environment they are working in, and how security needs to play a role in all of this."

There are four major areas included in the plan:

- Workforce Training and Communication – includes training employees so they are know what to do when faced with any type of security threat, and establishing a 24/7 hotline for employees to report security issues.
- Facility and Building Security – upgrading areas such as lighting, accessibility and entryway security.
- Threat Assessment and Management – training certain key employees on assessing threats and managing risk.
- Establishing Organizational Accountability and Sustainability – creating Tracker measures to document progress and effectiveness.

Lockwood explained that the team was very pleased the plan was approved and they have begun taking the next steps towards implementation.

"Some of the recommendations will be implemented fairly quickly," said Lockwood. "However, others, such as the facilities security piece, are areas we could not fully research until the plan was approved, so those larger elements we are just now getting into."

Lockwood added that assistance from several other divisions will be instrumental as the team moves through the implementation process, particularly Audits and Investigations, General

Services, Human Resources, Information Systems and Customer Relations.

A timeline is established for implementation, so employees will be hearing about the changes over the next several months. Once the team begins rolling these out it will be the employees who will make it successful.

"Workplace security is every employee's responsibility, not just one person or division, or team's," said Davis. "It is every bit as important as working safely on the job, and follows our values that our employees are our most valuable asset."

Team Members

Jeff Lockwood, Enos Criddle, Matt Davis, Kim Hickey, Tim Taylor, Joe Jarboe, Aaron Kincaid, Rick Bennett, Kim Tipton, Kendra Ezzell, Phil Hamilton.

Additional members for implementation phase:

Shari Dye, Lisa Lamons, Dan Rosenbohm, Diane Sipes, Chris Engelbrecht, Justin Smith, Todd Walters, Mike Shea, Brad Leonard and Tammy Wallace

